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ABSTRACT

This practicum presents a review of the literature pertaining to student participation in college governance and describes a study conducted to determine student perceptions of governance at College of the Mainland (Texas). A questionnaire was administered to a sample of students who do not participate in student government and to a sample of students who are members of student government; only full-time day students were sampled. Compared to student government members, non-participatory students were less likely to see their needs as coinciding with the activities of student government, were significantly more unaware of their opportunities for college governance, were more likely to feel that their participation would make no real difference, and were more likely to feel that institutional decision-making was not the responsibility of students. Both groups of students believed that student participation ought to make a difference in college governance. Recommendations to increase student participation in a college governance are: (1) steps should be taken to acquaint all students with the activities of student government; (2) there should be a study of what student needs can be served by student organizations; and (3) student government should be reorganized so that it has specific jurisdictions and parallel authority. (DC)

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A STUDY OF FACTORS RELATING TO STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY COLLEGE GOVERNANCE

by

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A PRACTICUM PRESENTED TO NOVA UNIVERSITY
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ABSTRACT

This is a study of student perceptions toward student participation in the governance of College of the Mainland. It was hypothesized that students do not participate because:

1. they are unaware of opportunities for participating;
2. they feel that institutional decision-making is not their responsibility;
3. they feel their participation makes no difference; and
4. they feel that the issues of institutional decision-making do not coincide with their personal needs.

A questionnaire was administered to the members of the Student Government and to a random sample of students. The means of the two groups were compared for each hypothesis. All four hypotheses were established at the .05 confidence level. The study includes recommendations. There is also a survey of the literature of student participation in college governance.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Are there specific student perceptions which affect their participation in the governance of College of the Mainland?

Hypotheses

H_1: College of the Mainland students who do not participate in college governance feel the issues of institutional decision-making do not coincide with their personal needs.

H_2: College of the Mainland students who do not participate in college governance are unaware of the opportunities for participation in the governance of the college that are available to them.

H_3: College of the Mainland students who do not participate in college governance feel their participation makes no real difference in the outcome of institutional decision-making.

H_4: College of the Mainland students who do not participate in college governance feel institutional decision-making is not the responsiblity of students.

Chapter 2

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

New Role for Students In College Governance

Typically, there are three distinct elements in community college society: students, faculty, and administration. Each of these three, ideally, is supposed to be the democratic cooperative of the other two. In the real world the three elements rarely work well together in the governing of the college, but they should. According to Robert MacIver, "An institution (community college) cannot be well-governed unless each of its components clearly recognizes its obligations as well as its rights in the promotion of the common ends" (Dykes, 1970).

Even the casual observer of student participation would have noticed that something dramatic happened in the late sixties--many students became active and wanted a right to be heard. As one student said, "We are angry because we are powerless. We have no voice in the forces which so completely control our lives" (Deegan, 1971). Young people began to see traditional student government--like the high school student council--as paternalistic, *in loco parentis*. They saw student government creating apathy and alienation among their number (Deegan, 1971). The People's Bicentennial Commission (1974) alludes to the concept of student government--

> an irrelevant and ugly set of organizational forms
> as men have ever generated in the name of 'freedom.'
> Why aren't there direct democracies?
> ...You couldn't do worse than most imitation...
> U.S.A. student governments if you planned a caricature
> of representative organization.

The literature, in the past decade, is full of exhortations, proposals, and recommendations in support of the student's right to participate in the governance of the college. Professional societies and associations, boards of control and other policy-setting groups have been reacting to the student actions and declarations of the past ten years.

In 1967 the American Association of Colleges, the National Student Association, the AAUP, and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators endorsed a "Joint Statement of Rights and Freedoms of Students." Part of it reads, "The Student body should have clearly defined means to participate in the formulation and application of institutional policy affecting academic and student affairs" (University of New Mexico, 1970). Keeton (1971) believes the student has a right as both a client and a buyer to a voice in institutional decision-making. Crucial to an effective learning process is student cooperation and commitment to inquiry. In the past, students have had only one avenue of protest--non-cooperation or selective cooperation. A much more viable alternative is to involve students in institutional planning so that the product of planning is one which students are ready to accept. According to Keeton, there are three reasons students have the right to share in decision-making.

1. Students' concerns and lives are most affected.
2. Student cooperation is essential to the effectiveness of the campus.
3. Student sponsorship and resources create and sustain the institution.

In 1973 the Carnegie Commission recommended that students

participate (with a vote) on joint or parallel college committees in areas of "special interest and competence." The Commission suggests committees like educational policy and student affairs. The Carnegie Commission is one of the few recommending bodies to recognize some of the difficulities inherent in student participation.

> How many students will involve themselves...? Will students attend committee meetings regularly? Will they inform themselves adequately and take responsibility? Can they be effective or accountable...? (Carnegie Commission.1973)

Further justifying the students' right to participation, the Lincwitz Panel on college unrest made these recommendations:

1. Students should be given substantial autonomy in non-academic and curricular affairs.
2. Students must face the consequences of illegal behavior.
3. students should be informed about campus decisions.
4. Students and administrators have an equal responsibility for proposing educational change (Jelleman,1972).

In a 1970 study, The Scope of Organized Student Protest in Junior Colleges, Dale Gaddy calls for more active student and faculty roles in governance, "especially in formulating and reviewing rules and regulations." Administrators are charged with designing and maintaining an atmosphere conducive to dialogue and openness. Richardson, et al. (1972) maintain in Governance For The Two-year College that a workable governance model should have two structures within it, one structure maintains communication and seeks advice (the Senate) from all three college elements; the other structure is administrative and makes decisions. The ideal governance structure would infer "shared authority." The authors are quick to add that in most cases the administrative structure is not adequate for student participation because students don't view themselves as part of that structure.

Students see the traditional authority structure as out of their influence and jurisdiction. Deegan (1971) predicts that new participating models

> will serve to make administration more acceptable by helping to increase the legitimacy and effectiveness of decisions by giving those affected by decisions a chance to air their views in a more effective manner.

Even though the involvement of students in the college governance process may be desirable, practitioners have not found it easy. This apathy is somewhat paradoxical because the new rights and privileges were won as a result of student activism in an earlier year.

This survey of the background on student participation in governance will deal with:

- Student Participation on the National Scene
- Problems in Implementing Student Participation
- Student Participation in the Future
- One College's Experience--College of the Mainland

Student Participation on the National Scene

There must be a very clear distinction between the degree of student participation in two and four year schools. The areas of student interest and the intensity of the activity (i.e. protest, committee work) has been very different in the two types of colleges.

Two-year and four-year schools. The four-year colleges have been involved in the issues of civil rights, integration, Viet Nam, and free speech (Gaddy, 1970). The four-year student has also been more interested in curriculum reform. According to Dale Gaddy (1970), "Activism toward a larger student role in campus governance (including curriculum development) increased."

The quality and intensity of the upper level student interest in decision-making is represented in the following questions which the National Student Association recommends asking:

. The catalog--who writes it? Can it be read?

. Are student consulted about personnel?

. Why don't students sit on decision-making bodies of their universities, or work as staff, for academic credit?

. What are students allowed to decide about the governance of their place of learning? (People's Bicentennial Commission, 1974)

These are very pointed and substantial questions.

Two-year students, on the other hand, were more likely to have non-physical protests on issues like food service, dress rules, and publications--according to a 1968 study by Milton Jones (Gaddy, 1970). The same study cited, significantly, that representation in the college policy-making body was subject to the greatest number of protests. A 1970 study found that junior colleges were not likely to have violent or disruptive activity, and that protests of any kind are not likely in rural areas (Gaddy, 1970).

Dale Gaddy surveyed 841 junior colleges and found an average of 1.5 incidents during 1968, much lower than four-year schools. The most popular issues were dress, grievance procedures, and services. Most of the protests fell in the student-administration area; sixty-eight per cent of the protest schools reported incidents in this area. Apparently, two-year college students also wanted an opportunity to participate in policy-making (Gaddy, 1970).

Of the some 1400 protests reported:

. 67 protests dealt with students not being able to voice grievances;

- 40 protests alleged administrative indifference;
- 44 protests said student participation on campus was insufficient.

Gaddy reported that the highest percentages of the student body protesting fell in the 11-15 per cent range. Two issues that gained this much attention were rules on student drinking and required attendance at school functions.

The Olympia Joint Committee on Higher Education (1973) found that community college personnel expressed more concern for student apathy than other types of institutions of higher education. This difference was explained by the shorter stay of community college students and the larger numbers of students in intensive technical-vocational training programs. Those reasons may not be correct, however, for student interest in governance has been found to be higher in private colleges than at the community colleges (Keeton, 1971). In summary, the two and four-year colleges differ significantly in the areas of student interests and the intensities with which they participate; in addition, private colleges experience a different kind of student participation.

Results of student participation. In any case college students have achieved one noted result in the last decade. They are finding ways to participate in decision-making. In some situations the progress is made slowly or haltingly; nevertheless, students are participating more.

The Washington State Legislative Committee's Survey (1973) found that nearly all institutions thought student contributions were valuable, and students were included to varying degrees. In no case did students have complete jurisdiction; in no case were student opinions completely ignored. On some campuses, students were members of an all-college

senate, a typical purpose being

> to initiate, review and recommend policy and procedures to the president on all matters within the jurisdiction of the college and to facilitate cooperation through communication among all component groups...

On other campuses, students participated through student associations and membership on major governance committees related to academic affairs, financial affairs, and program development.

McGrath (Keeton, 1971) reported in the fall, 1969, that 88.3 percent of the sample colleges he surveyed had students on at least one policy-making body. Over 50 percent of the colleges had student membership on curriculum committees, but only 22 percent of the colleges allowed student participation on an executive committee.

Student participation on governing boards is still another question. McGrath reported 20 percent of his sample campuses had students serving on governing boards, but only 2.7 percent allowed those students voting privileges. Blandford, in a 1972 report, stated that 14 percent of all colleges and universities had students on governing boards. The difference between public colleges and universities and two-year colleges was striking. Twenty-five percent of the public colleges and universities had student participants, while only 8 percent of the community colleges had such participation. Of those colleges that had student representation on the governing board, less than one-half allowed their student representatives to vote on all issues. An interesting trend was that, of the colleges surveyed, 27 percent reported a favorable attitude toward student participation. Interests like those of McGrath have caused the college community to learn more about the student attitudes toward participation.

In particular, areas of student interest have become more

clearly defined. Richardson (1972) reported the area of service (food, instruction, and counseling) and the staffing of these areas were high priority items for students. Keeton (1971) reported similar findings. Of high concern to students on public campuses were: school spirit, the bookstore, opportunity to review existing courses, teaching methods, teaching ability, and testing methods. Two-year students are primarily effective in the programming of college center activities. College Center program activities include speakers, films, dances--events primarily of entertainment value. Johnson County Community College asked its students in a survey of attitudes toward student activities what activities they felt were needed. The top three interests were:

1. educational symposia,
2. special interest groups, and
3. social service function (Tolbert, 1972).

There is some question as to the exact interest of students; that is, to what extent do students want to participate in the governance of the college? Do they want to be involved with hard decisions like personnel, tenure, etc.? There is some support for these interests (Washington State Legislature, 1973). Others feel that students are instead concerned with more personal needs like counseling, food service, discipline, and financial aid.

Also in the area of student interests (but not necessarily effective participation), the Carnegie Commission's study revealed the following student interest areas in declining order:

. student discipline

. degree requirements

- provision and content of courses
- admissions policies
- faculty appointments (Carnegie Commission, 1973).

The Carnegie Commission also noted an area of proven student effectiveness--student activities. Students have been effective in the establishment of cooperatives for bookstores, residences, and food service. One community college student body indicated two areas in which it thought it did well:

1. the student entertainment programs--dances, free films, concerts, art exhibits, coffee-houses, and
2. club activities--political clubs, drama, etc. (Tolbert, 1972).

The Commission's materials, derived primarily from the four-year college, clearly show interest beyond the student center activities level.

One study (Hawes and Trux, 1974) was designed to test the effect of student participation on college committees. The findings were these:

1. Faculty and students changed their opinions of each other in positive directions.
2. Faculty and students obtained information from their respective constituencies.
3. There was no difference in the participation or attitudes of students or faculty on the committees.
4. Sixty-six percent of the students viewed the committee experience as positive. They got to know faculty, administrative procedures and policy.
5. The various constituencies and feedback channels to those constituencies were not well defined.

The authors summarized that, although students did influence decisions in the governance process, the result was not a better informed

student population.

In summary, students are finding ways to participate They are serving on some boards of control; they are making their interests known on the campuses; they are functioning efficiently in administering their own college center activities.

Problems in Implementing Student Participation

Problems in implementing student participation come from administrators, faculty and students themselves.

Student attitudes and characteristics. Lack of interest in student government, poor turn-outs at elections, and poor participation on committees cause much talk about student non-participation. Many believe the fault lies with the students themselves.

> The vast majority of students, faculty, and outsiders in the university community are much too concerned about their private affairs to care about the university's governance, regardless of whether it is 'democratic' or 'oligarchical' (Baldridge, 1971).

According to the college staff member who works with students,

> Students want to be involved only with decisions which are crisis-oriented, like the cost of books. They want action, not on a long term basis, but by five o'clock (Smith, 1975).

There are many reasons for the lack of student participation. Earl McGrath's study, Should Students Share Power? (1970), discussed the lack of student participation at all levels, saying:

1. Students are too immature.
2. Students are transient.
3. Students lack knowledge.

These are both reasons for and objections to student participation.

Other reasons deal with the two-year student's lack of sophistication and his local environment. These students live at home, not in the dormitory. 50%-75% of these students work at least part-time (O'Banion, 1969). Furthermore, there is a tendency for "vocational students to accept institutional values"(AAJC, 1969).

In this area the Carnegie Commission had an interesting finding:

> Students in the social sciences, humanities, law and educational/social welfare areas are most desirous of greater influence, and those in engineering and other professions (except health and law) are least desirous.

It should follow that career education students(i.e. Tech-Voc) would have comparably low level interests in participation. This group of students make up a very large part of any community college.

The lack of participation in junior colleges is, in fact, striking. Very few students vote. A study of 85 California junior colleges showed that 83% of the colleges turned out fewer than 40% of the possible student vote. 38% of the colleges produced less than 20% of the student vote (Deegan, 1971).

Richardson(1972) says, however, that we should not delude ourselves by assuming that apathetic behavior means two-year college students are indifferent to the governance of the institution. There is an incongruity, he says, between students" perceptions and the traditional perception of students' role. The traditional role has been developed from institutional expectations, not student needs. The traditional role offers little authority and even less prestige to students. Communication leans heavily toward staff membership and reporting to administration. It is an authoritarian structure which controls behavior rather than guiding development. Students don't see themselves as part of the traditional structure of of the role that has been assigned to them.

Administrators often have assumed that the bureaucratic structure is inclusive. Students and faculty, in fact, are not a viable part of that structure. Students are at the lowest level on the organizational chart. Faculty and students are challenging the assumption by ignoring the traditional channels of communication. They are dropping out and assuming an apathetic posture in protest.

The report on the National Student Association's National Congress (Tamminen, 1969) said that the most notable feature of the governance issue was "the almost complete lack of any discussion of the topic." Governance was not a scheduled topic of discussion, neither was it initiated in any seminars. The author interpreted this fact as a manifestation of students' "incredible disillusionment and cynicism with authority, institutional structures, and organizations." Students perceive actual student participation in all governance as so weak as to be useless. Students are a "25% minority in a body of conservative faculty and administrators who are not honest, useful, or change-oriented." Student interests are seen as different from institutional interests; they are, therefore, best served outside the formal governance structure. In 1969, students at the NSA meeting were instead concerned with building independent student structures to serve as forces for political, social, and cultural change. These forces were seen by the students as not being tied to nor exclusively concerned with the university. Tamminen did not see this development as necessarily a healthy one. The independent student movement should not obscure the obviously important role of student representation in the governance of the college, he felt. The governance issue must be resolved by institutions by responding to the demands for change. This will be necessary, according to Tamminen, for any permanent and stable

situation where student interest is to exist.

The independent national student movement has not developed, however, and bureaucratic structures persist.

The primary problem of implementing student participation is that the college is a complex institution. It is generally controlled, legally, by a board of laymen, who employ specialists to staff and administer the college. Both of the latter groups have vested interests in the college; in addition, they have special ideas and perceptions about their own roles. All of this complexity exists before students come into the decision-making arena.

Administrative attitudes. Richardson (1971) refers to Getzel's idea that the needs of the social system are reflected in institutions and institutional change. In particular, institutions incorporate certain roles and expectations as society evolves into new forms. The needs of students and faculty have changed in the past years. How then have these changes been reflected within the two-year college? The transition from an institution directed by administrators to an institution where faculty and students have an active voice is not smooth. Richardson (1971) feels that

> It is possible that the human relationships which prevail today among student, faculty, administrators, and trustees in our two-year colleges have never been less promising.

The energy of college management, Richardson says, has recently been directed toward resolving conflict rather than achievement of institutional objectives.

Many of these problems will not be resolved, for there are problems inherent in the model of participative governance. Student participation, of course, is costly in that it involves faculty and

administrator time. Also, in heated situations, unwise decisions may be made. But more central is the fact that differences in institutional roles are associated with different perceptions of problems. Self-interest, the opportunity for influence, and the opportunity for observation differ between student and faculty groups. Keeton (1971) cites a study which dramatizes this point. Faculty and students were asked which areas of college governance they felt were most crucial.

	Faculty Order	Student Order
Working conditions	1	4
Intellectual climate	2	3
Academic programs	3	2
Student life	4	1

Keeton further suggests that consensus will not be found among student or faculty groups. On some issues, he says, groupings should be made as radical or conservative and across faculty-student-administrative lines.

Adjusting to the new role of students in the decision-making of the institution has been difficult for many administrators (Richardson, 1970).

> Administrators now are being compelled to face the question of student involvement before they even have been given the opportunity of a decent period of adjustment to the shock occasioned by the sudden rise of faculty within our institutions.

Some administrators see faculty and student groups' refusal to comply with adminstrative orders as an erosion of administrative power. The following quote reveals the feeling of one such person.

> We feel we have a better system (students on committees). It permits student participation without some of the questionable consequences of a situation where students actually sit on a board. There are real problems when some people have a

special "in" on the board and others do not. Finally, should a president be responsible to a student? Some consideration needs occasionally to be given to the authority of the president if (the president) is going to be held responsible - and (the president) is! (Blandford, 1972).

Many community college administrators believe in the punch bowl theory of administration. That is, if they delegate their role in the decision-making process, the administration's authority is diminished. In the extreme, administrators of this school of thought believe it would be possible to empty their bowl of authority entirely. Faculty and students are not accepting this rigid view (Richardson, 1970).

In fairness it must be said that the voices making this cry are not necessarily the loudest. Richardson(1972) for one is an avid proponent of student participation. He quotes Galbraith by saying that today's decision-making must be in groups. Intelligent decision-making must be based on information. In today's complex society, specialized information can be possessed by only a few. The ones with that information must be sought out whether they be administrators, faculty or students.

Faculty attitudes. According to Jelleman (1972) and some other writers, the real power struggle is not between students and administrators but between students and faculty. Hunter College in 1970 tried to revamp its governance structure. In the end, a professional arbitrator, had to be hired to help resolve the conflicts between students and faculty. Faculty are not enthusiastic about student participation because they have little power themselves (Richardson, 1972). Why should faculty give students what they don't have?

The faculty is unwilling to allow students the freedom to enter

into many areas of participation. Dykes (1970) and the Carnegie Commission (1973) noted that the faculty is reluctant to allow students in its personnel (i.e. evaluation) affairs. Such a position points up the very political nature of the college, an institution where the petition for power comes from at least three sources--administrative, faculty, and students. One area where faculty welcome students' participation is in the disciplining of students. The faculty is quite willing to let the students discipline themselves (Carnegie Commission, 1973).

A 1969 study conducted by the Center for Research and Development in Higher Education of faculty in all types of colleges and universities supports this point (Kruytbosch and Messinger, 1968). The study showed two-thirds of the faculty favored students having responsibility for formulating social rules and regulations. The issue of academic policy represented quite a different attitude, hwoever, Sixty per cent of the faculty agreed to students having some diluted voice in formulation of academic policy. Only thirty-six per cent thought students should have a vote on academic policy committees, and nine per cent thought students should have an equal voice with faculty. A further step was taken to try to characterize faculty who opposed greater student participation in academic affairs. It was found that they held these views.

1. College education is primarily for mastery of a body of knowledge or career preparation.
2. Students need considerable guidance and direction in their studies.
3. Current academic practices are satisfactory.

These faculty members had little contact with students outside of class

A similar study by Ohmer (Richardson, 1972) showed faculty to believe that

1. Students should participate in non-academic policy development;
2. results of evaluation of teachers should be made to the teacher only;
3. students should not participate in the governing board affairs.

Collective bargaining. The existence of organized, nationwide student power is due in part to this response of faculty. On a national basis, faculty have not sided with students. They have, in fact, even resisted some of the students' objectives (Jelleman, 1972). With collective bargaining, each year more items are negotiated. Unless students organize and demand their rights, faculty concerns and priorities will determine what the institution becomes. Dressel and Faricy (1972) believe that if students are left out of the educational monopoly, they must get representation. "They then have the constitutional right to organize." The National Student Association has considered measures which would make it a third party in the collective bargaining process.

There are some difficulties with the idea of students in the collective bargaining process, however. Most labor relations statutes recognize only an employer-employee relationship. Where does the student role fit in this concept? Second, students are transitory, so their interests are somewhat different from those of faculty.

It cannot be denied that if students get more power in the bargaining process, faculty will suffer more than the administration, because much of the student concern is directed to matters that now

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It cannot be denied that if students get more power in the bargaining process, faculty will suffer more than the administration, because much of the student concern is directed to matters that now

are largely the province of faculty. If both faculty and students organize, the character of decision-making may change to a pattern of resolution of conflict through continuing confrontation (Richardson, 1972).

Finally, it is important to grasp the total problem, to identify it so that it may be approached. Earl McGrath does when he writes

> Those...who are grappling with the difficult problems of reconstructing academic government should recognize that the issues are primarily political and only secondarily educational (McGrath, 1970).

Models For The Future

The record of successful student participation is not a long one; there are, however, some trends and models being considered and used. These may open new doors for student participation.

The new opportunities for student participation are materializing in several forms. Students are looking to the legal boards of control for representation and, in some cases, are actually serving on boards of trustees. Furthermore, promising new models for internal (i.e. within the college) participation are developing.

Students now serve on the boards of trustees of the Universities of Kentucky, Maine, Connecticut, and Massachusetts, to name a few (Sceiford, 1970). A new community college in the Chicago area, William Rainey Harper, has a student who serves on the board of trustees. These students sometimes do not have voting rights, however.

It has long been a practice in Scottish universities for students and faculty to "elect one or more outside persons as members of governing bodies" (Carnegie Commission, 1973). Students have also used

their new voting rights, (i.e. 18 year-olds voting) to "secure, through legislation, concessions, that students may not be able to obtain internally" (Carnegie Commission, 1973). This approach is dramatic because it could mean student "control," as opposed to student participation within the college.

The design that most writers advocate for maximum student involvement is some type of participative model. Students of organizational structure have noted that different communication structures produce different results. A tight communication structure has the advantage of insuring coordination. Conversely, a free flowing communication system promotes maximum problem solving, although coordination is sacrificed in the process. Richardson (1970) feels the proper choice for the community college is the free flowing model. Departments need not be closely coordinated since their functions tend to be separate; however, problem solving is a major concern. The traditional line-staff arrangment that most community colleges have adopted has to be the worst possible model.

A governance structure in addition to an administrative structure is needed to effect a participative, open communication model. There, joint committees including faculty, students, and administrators are conditional decision-making bodies. In policy issues, the combined groups exercise greater influence than the administration (Richardson and Bender, 1974). According to Richardson (1970), it would be most unfortunate if this faculty student involvement were forced; it should represent a conscious attempt by all parties to achieve the most effective working arrangement.

William Deegan has favored the participation models over the

jurisdiction models. In other words, one way to obtain more student activity is to lay out jurisdiction. For instance, faculty should deal with curriculum; administration should deal with budget; students should be involved in college center programs. Such an approach would permit separate areas of jurisdiction for different interest groups. Richardson's model delineates areas of separate areas of responsibilities, but with provision for much intercommunication. The criticism of absolute and clear jurisdiction is that it fragments the college. "This (model) is unwise because we need to focus on mechanisms for integration, not further separation" (Deegan, 1971).

Two participatory governance models which hold promise are represented, from William Deegan, in Figures 1 and 2 below.

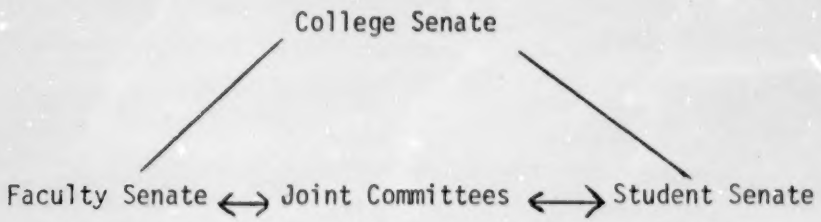

Fig. 1

This model, it should be noted, is not a decision-making model. Washington State University, Western Washington State College, and North Seattle Community College have all-college senate. The purpose of the senate is

> ...to initiate, review, and recommend policy and procedures to the president on all matters within the jurisdiction of the college itself and to facilitate cooperation through communication among all component groups at the college (Washington State Legislature, 1973).

The model in Fig. 2 is bi-cameral and may be decision-making.

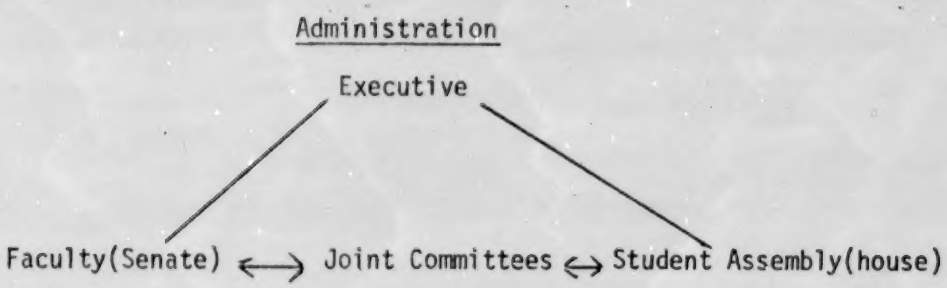

Fig. 2

The student assembly calls for identified student constituencies, and for the compensation of student assembly persons--compensation by credit and/or money. Brookdale Community College instituted a system of college governance which parallels the U S. Government. The students chosen to participate were usually active in the governance process. Students felt the system was giving them the needed voice,so their traditional student government was dismantled (Kudile, 1973).

The Carnegie Commission (1973) made an interesting suggestion which could be used within any model. It suggested holding hearings on topics of general concern where students may make presentations.

There seems to be a great deal of support for participating models.

The modern college is a complex and political institution, one not given to simplistic solutions. Dyke's study notes that the faculty tends to see

> a clear dichotomy betwen administrative power and faculty power...(It) does not exist, as attractive as that idea may be in its simplicity. Rather, faculty power and administrative power are, in a sense, fused, and each depends in considerable measure on the other.

If one added the student role to the above situation, one would have a more accurate depiction of the possibilities of broad participation. Students, faculty, and administration have many "common" interests which they should work on together. These new models may permit such a governance style.

The Local Experience

The Student Government at College of the Mainland is made up of a President, Vice-President, and Secretary, all elected each spring. The membership comprises six freshman senators and six sophomore senators, all elected at large in the fall. The group meets monthly, approximately, and has a paid faculty advisor. The President of the Student Government meets weekly with the college administrative staff in the Administrative Council, an advisory group.

According to the faculty sponsor, the impact student government has on the governance of the college is minimal (Ginsberg, 1975). In the past the student body has had a few benches installed on campus, successfully lobbied for a forty-minute lunch break, attended formal occasions like graduation and receptions, attended leadership conferences and state meetings, and presented a few petitions to Administrative Council; in short, the activity of the student government has been at a very low level and almost inconsequential.

The present Student Government has documented its dissatisfaction with its role by initiating a movement to restructure itself. It is planning to revise its constitution.

The students at College of the Mainland are most effective in planning and administering the College Center Program Council. This is about the extent of real student participation at College of the

Mainland.

This study will investigate specific student perceptions of governance at College of the Mainland which may or may not affect their participation. This chapter has dealt with student participation on the national scene in two and four-year colleges. There are clearly problems in getting student participation. Some of these problems lie in the attitudes of faculty and administration toward student involvement, but how do students perceive themselves? More specifically, how do students at College of the Mainland perceive their role in college governance?

Chapter 3

PROCEDURES AND RESULTS

Definition of Terms

Administrator - a manager of human behavior; one who, through the effort of others, accomplishes the objectives of the institution (Richardson, 1972).

College governance - the web of communication and decision-making which transforms a collectivity of individuals into an organization engaged in purposeful activity (Richardson, 1974).

Day student - one whose primary classroom activities are scheduled before 6:00 P.M.

Full-time student - one who is enrolled for at least twelve semester hours of credit.

Institutional decision-making - the process of determining who gets what - when and how (Lasswell, 1958).

Non-participant population - those students who currently hold no office in student government.

Participant population - student government officers and senators.

Participation - taking part in

Student government - a group of students formally organized for the purpose of decision-making.

Student senate - A College of the Mainland organization consisting of twelve students. Its purpose is decision-making in areas of student concern.

Working student - a person enrolled in college who also spends at least fifteen hours per week at a job for pay.

Limitations of the Study

1) The questionnaire was tested for clarity of language. It was not, however, validated quantatively.
2) The study was limited to full-time, day students. No attempt was made to compare responses of this population to those of part-time students or evening students.
3) The technique of cluster sampling was used. Although the clusters were randomly selected, it was not, because of expense, possible to use a purely random sample.
4) The questionnaire was administered in a classroom setting. This atmosphere might have introduced some response bias.
5) Only one administration of the questionnaire was made to students in the non-participant group. No follow-up was made to secure additional responses.
6) The questionnaire was administered to the participant population at a student senate meeting. This atmosphere might have introduced some response bias.
7) Moderator variables: In this study, variables such as age, sex, career goals, past government experience, marital status, and employment status were not considered. These variables might have affected the outcomes being measured.
8) Four questions were administered to test each of the four hypotheses. Mean scores for each of the four sets of questions were used as a basis for accepting or rejecting the null hypotheses. If any of the individual questions were not good discriminators, this

process would have diluted the power of the hypothesis-testing.

Basic Assumptions

It is assumed that:

1) The questionnaire is an accurate measure of student perceptions.
2) The sampling technique provided representative samples (Seltiz, 1966).
3) The two populations are reasonably homogeneous on variables other than the ones being tested.
4) The opportunities for participation in college governance are equal for the two populations.
5) Night students and part-time students represent different populations in terms of their perceptions of college governance.

Procedures for Collecting Data

The questionnaire (See Appendix) was administered to six students to test for clarity of language. No refinement was necessary. The questions were phrased so that one-half were positively stated and one-half were negatively stated. They were then ordered through a procedure of random selection.

To secure data from the non-participant population, four classes were randomly selected from the day schedule. Instructors were asked for their permission to administer the questionnaire. Questionnaires were administered at the beginning of each class period. Students were given the following instructions:

> The set of questions before you are designed to study participation in student government. There is no time limit on filling out your answers; however, it will probably take five

or ten minutes. Do not sign your name; your answers are absolutely anonymous and confidential. Please be very honest with your response.

No attempt was made to secure responses from student who were not present at the initial administration of the questionnaire. Responses from part-time students were eliminated. Questionnaires which were incompletely or improperly filled out also were eliminated.

The questionnaire was administered to the participant population at a student senate meeting. Student government participants who were not present at that meeting were contacted by mail and in person and asked to complete the questionnaire. These follow-up efforts continued until responses were obtained from 93% of the participant population.

Procedures for Treating the Data

This study was designed to test four hypotheses. Stated in the null form, the hypotheses are:

HO_1: College of the Mainland students who do not participate in college governance feel the issues of institutional decision-making coincide with their personal needs.

HO_2: College of the Mainland students who do not participate in college governance are aware of the opportunities for participation in the governance of the college that are available to them.

HO_3: College of the Mainland students who do not participate in college governance feel their participation would make a real difference in the outcome of institutional decision-making.

HO_4: College of the Mainland students who do not participate in college governance feel institutional decision-making is the responsibility of students.

To test each of these hypotheses, a questionnaire was administered to a sample of students who do not participate in student government and to a sample of students who are student government participants. The questionnaire contained a total of sixteen questions. On the questionnaire, the items were divided equally between positive and negative statements. The negatively stated questions were returned to their positive form for tabulation. For each of the four hypotheses, there were four questions. The responses for the four questions were added and a mean was computed. This treatment was applied to both the participant (student government) and non-participant groups. The mean responses of the two sample groups were compared by applying a t-test for independent samples. This procedure was repeated for each hypothesis. Differences at the .05 level of confidence or above were accepted as significant.

In addition, the mean scores of the two samples were compared for each of the sixteen questions by applying a t-test. Differences at the .05 level of confidence or above were accepted as significant.

Results. The first consideration was the testing of each of the four hypotheses.

HO_1: College of the Mainland students who do not participate in college governance feel the issues of institutional decision-making coincide with their personal needs.

The responses for questions 5, 9, 10, and 16 were added and a mean was computed. This was done for the participant and the non-participant groups.

Table 1

t-Test for Difference Between Mean Responses to Questions for Hypothesis 1

	$\bar{X}$	S	N
Non-Participant Group	2.81	.81	168
Participant Group	1.55	.56	56

$\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2 = 1.26$ df = 222

t -10.88*

*$p < .05$

Therefore, HO_1, the null hypothesis, was rejected.

HO_2: College of the Mainland students who do not participate in college governance are aware of the opportunities for participation in the governance of the college that are available to them.

The responses for questions 1, 6, 12, and 15 were added and a mean was computed. This was done for the participant and the non-participant groups.

Table 2

t-Test for Difference Between Mean Responses to Questions for Hypothesis 2

	$\bar{X}$	S	N
Non-Participant Group	2.44	.83	168
Participant Group	1.58	.56	56

$\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2 = .86$ df = 222

$t = 7.21$*

*$p < .05$

Therefore, HO_2, the null hypothesis, was rejected.

HO_3: College of the Mainland students who do not participate in college governance feel their participation would make a real difference in the outcome of institutional decision-making.

The responses for questions 3,7, 8, and 14 were added and a mean was computed. This was done for the participant and the non-participant groups.

Table 3

t-Test for Difference Between Mean Responses to Questions for Hypothesis 3

	$\bar{X}$	S	N
Non-Participant Group	2.19	.76	168
Participant Group	1.81	.69	56

$\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2 = .38$ df = 222

$t = 3.28^*$

$^*p < .05$

Therefore, HO_3, the null hypothesis, was rejected.

HO_4: College of the Mainland students who do not participate in college governance feel institutional decision-making is the responsibility of students.

Responses for questions 2, 4, 11, and 13 were added and a mean was computed. This was done for the participant and the non-participant groups.

Table 4

t-Test for Difference Between Mean Responses to Questions for Hypothesis 4

	$\bar{X}$	S	N
Non-Participant Group	1.91	.77	168
Participant Group	1.58	.73	56

$\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2 = .33$ df = 222

$t = 2.81^*$

$^*p < .05$

Therefore, HO_4, the null hypothesis, was rejected.

The second consideration was the analysis of each item. A comparison of the mean responses of the participant group and non-participant group was made for each question. On a scale of 1-4, high numbers represent agreement with the hypothesis. This analysis was made in an attempt to gain further information about differences in the response patterns between the two groups.

The results of the individual items will be reported in an order corresponding to the four hypotheses. All items have been returned to their positive form.

Question 5: I do not participate in student government because I have to work.

Table 5

t-Test for Difference Between Mean Responses to Question 5.

	$\bar{X}$	S	N
Non-Participant Group	2.85	.92	42
Participant Group	1.42	.51	14

$\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2 = 1.43$ df = 54

$t = 5.51^*$

$^*p < .05$

The difference between means for this item was significant at the .05 level of confidence.

Question 9: My family and/or friends require my time so that I cannot participate in student government.

Table 6

t-Test for Difference Between Mean Responses to Question 9

	$\bar{X}$	S	N
Non-Participant Group	3.07	.80	42
Participant Group	1.56	.51	14

$\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2 = 1.51$ df = 54

$t = 6.60^*$

$^*p < .05$

The difference between means for this item was significant at the .05 level of confidence.

Question 10: I think participation in student government is an unimportant way to spend my time.

Table 7

t-Test for Difference Between Mean Responses to Question 10.

	$\bar{X}$	S	N
Non-Participant Group	2.71	.70	42
Participant Group	1.50	.51	14

$\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2 = 1.21$ df = 54

$t = 5.94^*$

$^*p < .05$

The difference between means for this item was significant at the .05 level of confidence.

Question 16: Participating in student government is not as important as other things I do.

Table 8

t-Test for Difference Between Mean Responses to Question 16

	$\bar{X}$	S	N
Non-Participant Group	2.61	.76	42
Participant Group	1.71	.72	14

$\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2 = .90$ df = 54

$t = 3.88^*$

$^*p < .05$

The difference between means for this item was significant at the .05 level of confidence.

Question 1: If I wanted to participate in student government I would not know how to go about it.

Table 9

t-Test for Difference Between Mean Responses to Question 1

	$\bar{X}$	S	N
Non-Participant Group	2.69	.94	42
Participant Group	1.42	.51	14

$\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2 = 1.27$ df = 54

$t = 4.80^*$

$^*p < .05$

The difference between means for this item was significant at the .05 level of confidence.

Question 6: I know little about the activities of student government.

Table 10

t-Test for Difference Between Mean Responses to Question 6.

	$\bar{X}$	S	N
Non-Participant Group	2.90	.75	42
Participant Group	1.64	.49	14

$\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2 = 1.26$ df = 54

$t = 5.86^*$

$^*p < .05$

The difference between the means for this item was significant at the .05 level of confidence.

Question 12: Few students are eligible to participate in student government.

Table 11

t-Test for Difference Between Mean Responses to Question 12

	$\bar{X}$	S	N
Non-Participant Group	2.28	.67	42
Participant Group	1.78	.69	14

$\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2 = .50$ df = 54

$t = 2.40^*$

$^*p < .05$

The difference between the means for this item was significant at the .05 level of confidence.

Question 15: There exists no student government in this college.

Table 12

t-Test for Difference Between Mean Responses to Question 15

	$\bar{X}$	S	N
Non-participant Group	1.90	.53	42
Participant Group	1.50	.51	14

$\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2 = .40$ df = 54

$t = 2.46^*$

$^*p < .05$

The difference between the means for this item was significant at the .05 level of confidence.

Question 3: Working in student government is a waste of time because its ideas are never accepted

Table 13

t-Test for Difference Between Mean Responses to Question 3

	$\bar{X}$	S	N
Non-Participant Group	2.02	.74	42
Participant Group	1.71	.82	14

$\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2 = .31$ df = 54

$t = 1.32^*$

$^*p > .05$

The difference between the mean responses for this item was not significant.

Question 7: Student government makes no real difference in the way that this college is run.

Table 14

t-Test for Difference Between Mean Responses to Question 7.

	$\bar{X}$	S	N
Non-Participant Group	2.30	.71	42
Participant Group	1.92	.61	14

$\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2 = .38$ df = 54

$t = 1.79^*$

$^*p > .05$

The difference between mean responses to this item was not significant.

Question 8: Nobody really cares much about my ideas of how this college should be run.

Table 15

t-Test for Difference Between Mean Responses to Question 8

	$\bar{X}$	S	N
Non-Participant Group	2.42	.76	42
Participant Group	2.07	.61	14

$\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2 = .35$ df = 54

$t = 1.56^*$

$^*p > .05$

The difference between the mean responses for this item was not significant.

Question 14: College of the Mainland's administration doesn't pay much attention to what students want.

Table 16

t-Test for Difference Between Mean Responses to Question 14.

	$\bar{X}$	S	N
Non-Participant Group	2.02	.78	42
Participant Group	1.64	.74	14

$\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2 = .38$ df = 54

$t = 1.59^*$

$^*p > .05$

The difference between mean responses to this item was not significant.

Question 2: I am not glad when I hear about students' wanting to help run colleges.

Table 17

t-Test for Difference Between Mean Responses to Question 2.

	$\bar{X}$	S	N
Non-Participant Group	1.80	.59	42
Participant Group	1.28	.46	14

$\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2 = .52$ df = 54

$t = 3.00^*$

$^*p < .05$

The difference between mean responses for this item was significant at the .05 level of confidence.

Question 4: Students have no responsibility to help make decisions about the running of a college.

Table 18

t-Test for Differences Between Mean Responses to Question 4

	$\bar{X}$	S	N
Non-Participant Group	1.61	.53	42
Participant Group	1.50	.65	14

$\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2 = .11$ df = 54

$t = .63^*$

$^*p > .05$

The difference between mean responses to this item were not significant.

Question 11: Administrators and faculty are paid to run a college; therefore, they, not students, should do it.

Table 19

t-Test for Difference Between Mean Responses to Question 11.

	$\bar{X}$	S	N
Non-Participant Group	1.92	.83	42
Participant Group	1.57	.85	14

$\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2 = .35$ df = 54

$t = 1.35^*$

$^*p > .05$

The difference between mean responses to this question were not significant.

Question 13: Administrators and faculty really know more about running a college than students do; therefore, the administrators and faculty should be responsible.

Table 20

t-Test for Difference Between Mean Responses to Question 13.

	$\bar{X}$	S	N
Non-Participant Group	2.28	.91	42
Participant Group	2.20	.78	14

$\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2 = .08$ df = 54

$t = .29^*$

$^*p > .05$

The difference between mean responses to this item were not significant.

Chapter 4

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Hypothesis 1: This hypothesis is strongly established. Non-participating students are less likely to see their needs as coinciding with the activities of the student government. Responses to item 9 indicate many College of the Mainland students' lives are filled with family and friends, precluding their involvement in student government. The items dealing with work and importance of student government (5,10, 16) revealed differences between the two groups but not such strong agreement with the hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2: Non-participating students tend to be less aware of the opportunities within student government. A majority of respondents from both groups know that there is a student government at College of the Mainland (item 15). Likewise, many indicated awareness of broad eligibility (item 12). For both these items, however, non-participation reponses were significantly more supportive of the hypothesis than participant responses. Again in item 6, there was a significant difference in the response of the two groups. Particular attention should be paid to the mean response score of the non-participant group for item 6; it indicates that communication about the activities of the student government is not too effective at College of the Mainland.

Hypothesis 3: It is interesting to note that when the four

items for Hypothesis 3 were combined, a significant difference between the two groups was found. However, there was no difference between the two groups on any of the four items when they were dealt with separately. It can be said, therefore, that in general non-participants are more likely to feel their participation would make no real difference in the outcome of institutional decision-making. None of the more specific statements can be supported, however. In fact, the mean responses for both groups on items 3, 7, 8, 14 were on the "disagree" end of the scale. This fact would suggest a general feeling of administrative support for student opinions at College of the Mainland.

Perhaps the difference between the two groups that was found comes from the fact of participation. That the administration listens is a necessary assumption for making student government a valid activity. Therefore, people who spend their time in student government are probably going to be more emphatic when they express their beliefs. Or, their experience may make them more sure of their perceptions of administrative support.

A less optimistic interpretation is that students may be responding this way because not believing in student government and not having the administration value them is too painful a thought. One of the strongest responses on the questionnaire was to item 6, which shows that non-participating students know very little about the activities of student government. Therefore, how could they know if their participation makes any real difference? They may be answering the way they think they ought to be answering. In sum, there are two possible interpretations to the responses to this hypothesis. Students either really believe in the impact of student participation or they want to

believe in it.

Hypothesis 4: Support of Hypothesis 4 indicates that the non-participants are more likely to feel that institutional decision-making is not the responsibility of students. When the four items within this category are analyzed, however, a significant difference between groups was noted only for item 2. Student government participants were glad when they heard about students' wanting to help run colleges. Non-participants were less likely to respond that way. The other three items (4, 11, 13) in this category dealt specifically with student responsibility in the college governance process. There was no difference between groups in their perceptions of this responsibility. Item 2 seems to be more closely tied to the affective area; the other three items are more like cognitive beliefs. Perhaps student government officers, because of the fact of their participation, have a greater emotional involvement in the issue.

Again, the responses to items 4, 11, and 13 support the possibility raised in relationship to hypothesis three--that student participation ought to make a difference in governance outcomes. Responses to these items clearly show that College of the Mainland students think students have a responsibility to participate in college governance. It would be illogical and perhaps painful to believe that such participation would be futile.

In summary, the non-participant group taken as a whole seems to have these feelings: "Student participation in college governance is a worthwhile activity, but there are other activities that are more important for me. Besides that, I don't know a lot about what is going on here."

This does not appear to be a healthy situation for students: they feel responsible and they feel that their participation makes a real difference in the decisions of the institution, and yet, in reality, they don't participate.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Steps should be taken to improve communication with all students. The review of the literature and our results indicate that communication is a widespread problem; however, lack of apparent solutions does not mean that the problem should be ignored.

Consideration of the following should be made:

1. Informing students of decisions,
2. holding "town meeting" type sessions,
3. letting students know who their representative is,
4. participating on joint committees,
5. serving on the board of trustees, and
6. publishing a monthly student newsletter.

Recommendation 2: There should be a study of what needs students have which could be served by student organizations. Community college students have non-traditional needs which are not well-served by traditional student governments. This should be a systematic study. Some of the present needs suggested in the literature and which are not being served are:

1. finding jobs,
2. transportation,
3. socializing experiences,
4. family obligations,

5. scheduling classes,

6. time,

7. financial aid,

8. appropriate learning experiences.

An example of a non-traditional approach would be paying a student and awarding him credit for serving in a student government function. In this way a student who has to work could participate.

Recommendation 3: The student government should be reorganized so that it has specific jurisdictions and the parallel authority. The reorganization should consider models for the future discussed in this study. If the new student government is to fit into the college community, its organizers should be a group of faculty and administrators, as well as students. The Committee on Committees might serve as the sponsoring structure.

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APPENDIX 1

Questionnaire

The set of questions before you are designed to study participation in study government. There is no time limit on filling out your answers, however, it will probably take five or ten minutes. DO NOT SIGN YOUR NAME. Your answers are anonymous and absolutely confidential; please be very honest with your responses.

I am currently enrolled for at least 12 semester hours of credit.

Yes_____ No_____

I have filled out this questionnaire in another class.

Yes_____ No_____

CIRCLE THE RESPONSE WHICH BEST FITS YOUR FEELINGS ABOUT EACH STATEMENT.

SD = Strongly disagree

D = Disagree

A = Agree

SA = Strongly agree

SD D A SA 1. If I wanted to participate in student government I would know how to go about it.

SD D A SA 2. I am glad to hear about students' wanting to help run colleges.

SD D A SA 3. Working in student government is a waste of time becuase its ideas are never accepted.

SD D A SA 4. Students have a responsibility to help make decisions about the running of a college.

SD D A SA 5. I do not participate in students government because I have to work.

SD D A SA 6. I know little about the activities of student government.

SD D A SA 7. Student government makes a real difference in the way that this college is run.

SD D A SA 8. Nobody really cares much about my ideas of how this college should be run.

SD D A SA 9. My family and/or friends require my time so that I cannot participate in student government.

SD D A SA 10. I think participation in student government is an important way to spend my time.

SD D A SA 11. Administrators and faculty are paid to run a college; therefore, they, not students, should do it.

SD D A SA 12. Few students are eligible to participate in student government.

SD D A SA 13. Administrators and faculty really know more about running a college than students do; therefore, the administrators and faculty should be responsible.

SD D A SA 14. College of the Mainland's administration pays a lot of attention to what students want.

SD D A SA 15. There exists a student government in this college.

SD D A SA 16. Participating in student government is as important as other things I do.